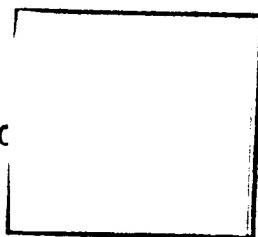


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JPRS: 3247
16 May 1960

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DISTRIBUTION STATEMENT A
Approved for public release
Distribution Unmanned

19980121 193

Distributed by:

OFFICE OF TECHNICAL SERVICES
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
WASHINGTON 25, D.C.
Price \$0.50

U. S. JOINT PUBLICATIONS RESEARCH SERVICE
205 EAST 42nd STREET, SUITE 300
NEW YORK 17, N. Y.

DTIC QUALITY INSPECTED 3

F O R E W O R D

This publication was prepared under contract by the UNITED STATES JOINT PUBLICATIONS RESEARCH SERVICE, a federal government organization established to service the translation and research needs of the various government departments.

JPRS: 3247

CSO: 3707-D

THE ORGANIZATION OF SCIENTIFIC WORK IN THE USSR

A Book Review

/ Following is a translation of an article by S.A. Radzhabov and V.I. Koretskiy in the Russian periodical Vestnik vysshey shkoly (Review of Higher Schools), Vol. XVII, No. 7, July 1959, Moscow, pages 91-94. /

The successful development of Soviet science depends to a great extent on the lawful regulation of the organization of scientific work, and up until recently there has been no attention paid to its investigation in the juridical literature. The monograph of G. I. Fed'kin published in the second half of last year makes up for this deficiency to a considerable degree: Academy of Sciences USSR, A. Ya. Vyshinskiy Law Institute, G. I. Fed'kin, (Pravovyye voprosy organizatsii nauchnoy raboty v SSSR) / Juridical Problems in the Organization of Scientific Work in the USSR /, Gosyurizdat / State Publishing House of Juridical Literature /, 1958, edition of 3,000, 356 pages, price 11 rubles 65 kopecks.

In reviewing the activities of the Soviet state in the field of the organization and development of science, the author emphasizes that "by ensuring the economic, political, and other conditions of the free development of science, it has previously resolutely refuted and continues to refute the 'freedom' of scientists and scientific institutions from society, from the guidance of the socialist state. In the name of all society the Soviet state has presented and continues to present to science and its representatives definite requirements; it directs the efforts of the scientists toward solving such scientific tasks as ensure the growth of material wellbeing and spiritual culture" (page 20).

The socialist state carries out all its activities, particularly in the development of science, under the leadership of the Communist Party.

The book thoroughly indicates the guiding role of the Communist Party in the organization of science. The party works out the ideological basis of science and struggles against ideological perversions in it; it determines the

principal tasks of science and scientists in the various stages of the development of society; it leads the struggle for close ties between science and practice; it guides the establishment of scientific cadres and takes care of the training of new cadres; it examines the situation of the individual branches of science and scientific institutions, taking steps to improve their work; it directs the activities of state agencies to which the scientific institutions are subordinate; it conducts the organizational work in scientific institutions, mobilizing their collectives for the fulfillment of the plans for scientific research and putting their results into practice; it issues guiding instructions on the problems of the lawful regulation of science.

The introduction to the work under review is devoted to the general problems of state and party leadership of the development of science. Its subsequent sections embrace the large circle of concrete problems concerning the legal status of scientific institutions and scientists, as well as the organization of the state leadership of scientific institutions in the Soviet Union.

All these problems are also investigated, as a rule, in the historical aspect. The book depicts the development of the individual law institutes during the years of Soviet rule, the fundamental distinction between Soviet scientific institutions and the scientific institutions of Czarist Russia from the point of view of their legal status; it cites examples characterizing the legal status of scientific institutions in other socialist countries. In addition, the author does not limit himself to an analysis of the peculiarities of the structure of the institutions, but also examines the order of their activities.

The monograph of G. I. Fed'kin was published by the State Publishing House of Juridical Literature; moreover, its very title indicates the scope of its juridical subject matter. However, its content goes beyond the narrow professional problems of interest solely to jurists.

As a matter of fact, what higher-school student, regardless of his speciality, does not concern himself, let us say, about problems of the coordination of scientific research? Under the conditions of the powerful development of science in the USSR, these problems attain great importance.

The coordination of scientific research work in a socialist society is based on the planned development of the economy. Its specific character, as the author correctly notes, consists in the fact that, "by guiding the tasks and aims which stand before science as a whole and before a given scientific collective, the scientists of institutions

differing according to departmental affiliation and sometimes through diverse specialities unite their forces, thus increasing their opportunities and enriching each other with scientific ideas; they join with workers of industry and other branches of the economy and culture, thus ensuring closer cooperation between science and industry" (page 202).

The critical remarks and considerations of the author concerning the coordination of scientific research will undoubtedly be useful not only for the academic institutions but also for the higher educational institutions.

The interest of the readers--teachers in higher educational institutions--will be aroused by the section of the book shedding light on the legal status of scientists. The author cautions against underevaluating the role of legislation in this field. "Attracting young new forces to science, the quality of their scientific training, the accuracy of the attestation of scientific cadres and the manning of scientific institutions--all this depends to great extent on one or another solution of legal problems", he writes (page 212).

In his opinion, it would be very opportune to assure, via a lawful procedure, that scientific workers be recognized as "people who have the necessary qualifications for conducting scientific research (independently or under the direction of other scientists) and who conduct this work in scientific research institutes, higher educational institutions, and in the design bureaus and laboratories of ministeries and departments" (pages 217-218). The author feels that those people who work in industrial, agricultural, and other enterprises and institutions should also belong in this same category, if these people have the necessary qualifications for scientific work and combine practical work with their scientific research endeavors.

This book examines in detail the history of legislation concerning learned degrees and ranks and the up-to-date legal regulation of these questions.

Analyzing the suggestions in the journals concerning what is necessary to change the existing procedure of conferring learned degrees and ranks, the author introduces a number of concrete proposals regarding these problems.

Thus the book under review embraces all the problems connected with scientific work. In this regard the content of the book is broader than its title would indicate, since, besides the problems of organizing scientific work, the legal regulation of the conduct of research and the use of its results are also reviewed.

Vast normative material, especially departmental, a whole series of archive data, a critical examination of opinions in the literature on the problem touched upon-- all this makes the monograph of G. I. Fed'kin a very valuable aid for scientific workers interested in organizing research in the Soviet Union.

We feel that it is necessary to make a few critical remarks concerning the book in response to the appeal of the author to his readers to assist by their criticism and advice in the future development of this extremely important theme.

In our opinion, the structure of the monograph would have profited if, directly after the introduction, there had been a section on "Legal Questions in the Organization of the Management of Scientific Institutions in the USSR" (we are omitting here the word "state"), inasmuch as questions of state and party management of scientific institutions must, we think, be placed in one chapter.

I doubt that the classification of scientific institutions suggested by the author is apt: 1) the Academy of Sciences with the scientific research institutes and other scientific institutions, as well as the higher educational institutions, an organic part of it; 2) branch scientific research institutes; 3) scientific research laboratories of industrial and other enterprises.

At the basis of this classification lies the character of the scientific tasks resolved by the institutions. But is it not true that in the higher educational institutions the conditions and procedure of research work are very specific, inasmuch as such work is here organically combined with education, which is no less significant? Consequently, in the classification of higher educational institutions, it is expedient to group them independently.

Attributing scientific institutions to a certain group is of course not purely of "academic" interest. One can easily be persuaded of this. Actually, the case where the author did not separate the higher educational institutions as an independent group of scientific institutions resulted in an inadequate interpretation in his book of the legal forms of organizing research in an upper school.

Here is a characteristic example. It is well known that since the 1956/1957 school year there has been introduced in the upper educational institutions a new principle for computing the strength of the professorial-teaching staff, proceeding from the average number of students per teacher. Computing the table of organization in this way makes it possible to ensure a really logical union of the scientific and teaching work of teachers in accordance with their inclinations and opportunities.

However--and the Ministry of Higher Education well knows of this--the new principle was not put into practice on a sufficiently wide scale. Formerly the table of organization in many higher educational institutions was drawn up by computing the teaching load of the teachers. As a result, some scientific workers in the higher educational institutions were frequently overloaded with teaching work, and sometimes only the late evening, the usual holidays, and time free from other duties remained to them for research work. Is it not clear that this question, so important for higher educational institutions, needs additional concretization and settlement as regards norms? and that the author did not have the right to bypass it?

It is not possible to agree with all the suggestions put forth in the book. In our opinion, some of them should be made more precise.

Let us take, as an example, the definition of the term "scientific worker" which we used above. This definition, even though it encompasses much, does not cover all the various categories of scientific workers. It seems that it would be best to formulate it in the following way: "Scientific workers are workers in scientific and other institutions, organizations, and enterprises who have the appropriate qualifications and who carry out, by virtue of their official mission, scientific work either exclusively or combined with other official duties."

The way the question of the procedure of awarding learned degrees and ranks is posed is, in our opinion, debatable. The point is not whether a candidate for the degree of doctor of science must write a special dissertation, or whether (as the author suggests) he can present a monograph, which, in conjunction with his other scientific endeavors, serves as the basis for having the degree conferred on him. Until another, more perfect procedure of the attestation of scientific and teaching cadres is found, the existing one must remain in force.

Another matter: Perhaps it is necessary to introduce such corrective measures as would unconditionally ensure competent conclusions concerning the scientific significance of other work done by the candidate for a doctorate; to establish rigid periods in which to examine dissertations in the institution itself, in the higher educational institution, and in the Higher Attestation Commission; and to make the discussion of these affairs more public.

One can hardly agree with the proposal made by G.I. Fed'kin to broaden the property rights of authors who work in scientific institutions, to pay them fees, over and above

their wages, for published work created in line of official duty. At the present time, scientists belong to the category of highly paid workers, and there is no necessity whatsoever of increasing paid workers, and there is no necessity whatsoever of increasing their salary by paying an author's fee for planned work (with the exception of students).

Even though a significant part of the book is devoted to the activities of academic scientific research institutions, problems of the work of the academies of science of the union republics have not been sufficiently reflected. The ever-increasing role of the academies in the development of science has not been stressed enough in the 18 pages of the monograph set aside for these problems, some academics not being mentioned at all.

In this article we have dwelled primarily on the problems discussed in G. I. Fed'kin's book which concern the upper school. Other legal problems posed in this book, which will undoubtedly play a positive role in the matter of perfecting and codifying legislation, must be examined in the pages of juridical journals.

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